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IRAQ

## DAMAGE TO OSIRAK DOME REPORTED

Paris L'EXPRESS in French 18 Oct 80 p 125

[Text] Is Osirak undamaged? In this exclusive photograph taken on Wednesday, 1 October, with telelenses, at a distance of 800 meters from the French-Iraqi nuclear research center of Tamuz, the huge mass of concrete which houses the research reactor does not seem to have suffered any damage.

One must not rely on appearances. In spite of the fact that since their return the 75 French technicians, who were there when the bombing took place, have been enjoined to remain silent, some information has leaked. The Osirak project is going to be at least 1 year behind schedule. And probably much more than that. To quote one of the top French intelligence sources, the flyers who carried out the air raid were "magnificent pilots." Flying at a very low altitude, they aimed their devices—probably American made air-to-surface Shrike missiles—against the lower part of the concrete dome.

The result: on the outside some unspectacular damage which led nuclear physicists to conclude rather hastily that the bombing had failed. But people who specialize in concrete construction were quick to understand. The explosions caused cracks and a general weakening of the building. The reactor core is undamaged but the entire structure will have to be underpinned. And perhaps one will have to start all over again.

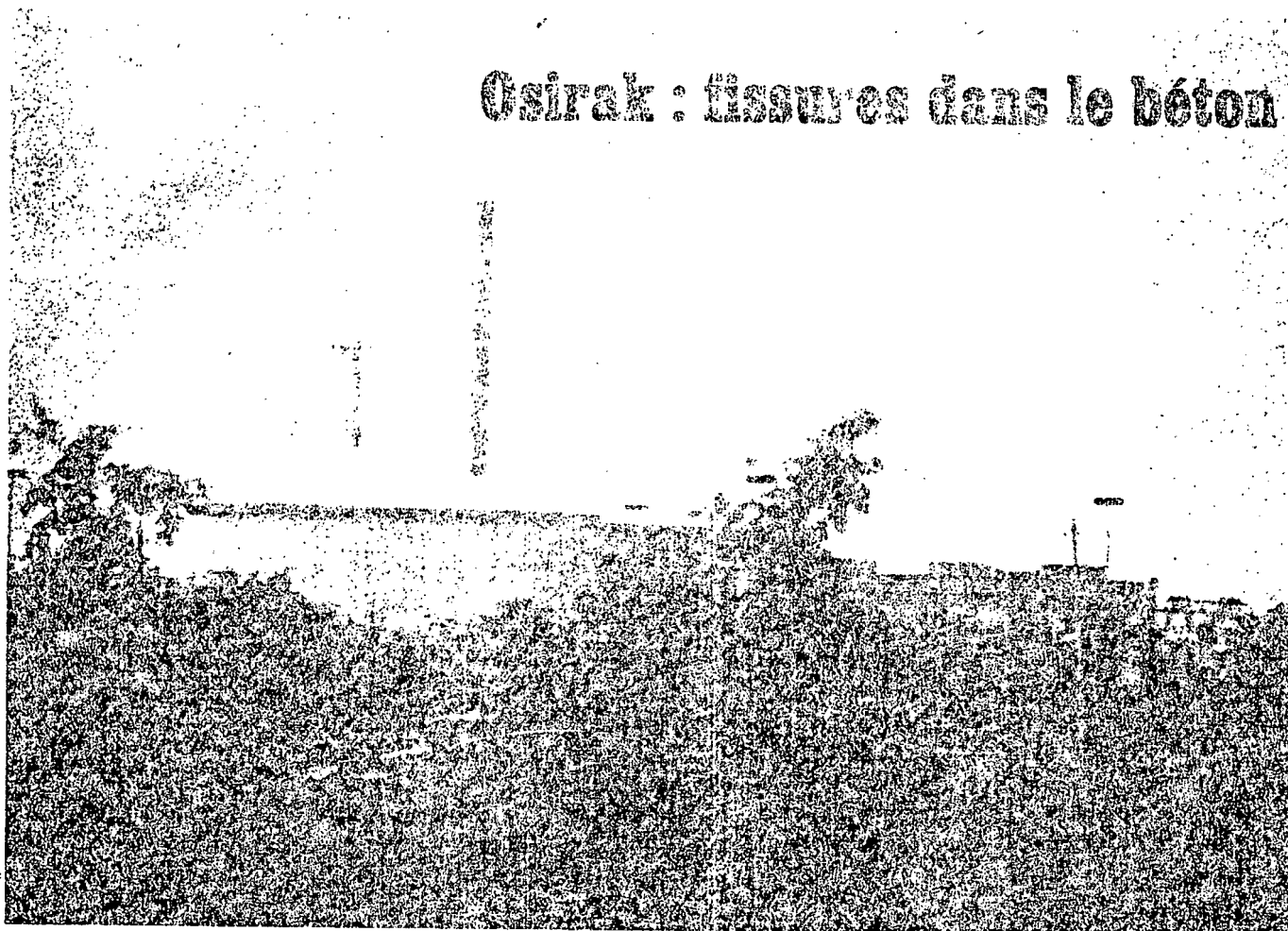
What was the nationality of those "magnificent pilots?" Israeli, as was rumored on the very day of the attack.

Today, it is known from more reliable sources that the two Israeli Phantom planes took the shortest route and did not hesitate to fly over southern Syria before penetrating at low altitude towards Baghdad. Neither the Israeli official denials strangely made on the day after the raid ("antisemitic slanders") nor the alertness of the military censure in Tel Aviv have been able to conceal this essential fact: Israel took advantage of the war which is going on in the Gulf to win time and delay the threat of the "Arab bomb." Its commandos had already sabotaged the core of the La Seyne reactor near Toulon.

This now unavoidable setback in the Osirak project has prompted mild reactions in Paris. The anger of some officials is strongly neutralized by the relief felt by

by some highranking diplomats and by many technicians from the Atomic Energy Commission. They were having serious misgivings as the date when the research reactor would go into service came nearer; a reactor which could rapidly give nuclear military capability to Iraq. This, in spite of all the officials denials.

## Osirak : fissures dans le béton



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